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REPORTING FOR OC NO. 7

This general and quick review of the proposed schedule of instruction in reporting for OC #7 covers the need for a realistic expression of objectives, proper emphasis by phrasing and selection of accepted principles and practices of CS reporting, and the maximum use of available reporting opportunities by the integration into all possible operational exercises the assignment of writing reports. Whenever feasible the reports would be written in a workroom under direction of reports instructors or would be at least checked by them.

The objectives in CS reporting instruction have been realistically expressed on many an occasion, especially by [REDACTED] C/RQM, when he said in effect that good intelligence comes from good reporters working on good targets. Again, Mr. [REDACTED] has said that the instruction in reporting should have for a goal field case officers so prepared that they can produce reports acceptable for dissemination without further processing.

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Certainly Mr. [REDACTED] has laid the instruction purposes on the line:

First, to put before student case officers the accepted principles and practices of CS reporting.

Second, to give him maximum experience in applying principles and carrying out practices.

Third, to give him sufficient briefing on and practice in processing CS information reports to insure that he can do the job in final form.

Objectives stated something like this are suggested as replacements for such dreamy abstraction as "To apply evaluating instruments on a continuing basis" The phrasing, however, is much less important than keeping the real objectives always clear. Proper emphasis in the instruction would seem to be upset in the proposed schedule by showing first an elementary film on the principles of good writing. To begin with, the reporter's putting information values into a report is not a matter of "good writing"; it is a matter of collection basically guided largely by requirements and by evaluations from both desk and customer. First, the reporter needs to know how to go about his collection job. Then comes the necessity for communicating

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what he has collected. Involved in the communication of factual information is effective writing, not good writing. Failure to recognize the difference results in such hopelessly impressive gobbledygook as "To apply evaluating instruments" etc.

Again in "The Character of Good Reporting," the connection in a single lecture between highlighting "good writing" and accenting and emphasizing the intelligence cycle is not clear, especially when thrown in for good measure is "relating the use of languages and symbols (words) as a means" of communication.

Better emphasis might come from treating intelligence requirements, refined into assignments, as the first step in the reporter's job after general discussion of that job.

If the preparation of the raw report, with its division into operational, positive, and interpretive sections, is treated first, then lectures on "The Nature of Operational Information" and "Reporting of Operational Information" naturally follow. Organization and expression of information fit in here. The use of operational information and the need for complete and detailed positive information leads directly into the matters of evaluation of the reports in terms of validity. Of course, that brings up the lecture on "Paper Mills and Fabrication." The reporter has little use for a morgue (files and records) as such. Files and records should be taught as useful in evaluating and interpreting information.

The lecture on intelligence reporting should be followed with practice in preparing the CS report in its final multilith form from raw reports. Then could come the lecture on cable information reports and the use of headings and leads from the CS reports as practice stuff for the cables. In other words, the reporter now has been instructed and given practice in getting an assignment, collecting information, writing a raw report, and processing the raw report into the finished field-headquarters and cable forms. The practice should be repeated again and again.

Effective writing cannot be learned by looking at movies and listening to talk; it cannot be taught that way either. Everlasting practice under competent direction is the only path to such skill. For that purpose, it should be possible to set up a study hall, equipped with reference material and typewriters, where all assigned writing could be done. One competent instructor would need to be on duty for two or three hours each evening. With the directing of the laboratory

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rotated, the practice might be feasible with little or no addition to the staff.

Neither can effective reporting be taught by lecture, even with visual aids. Here, too, skills are developed only by doing. It would seem that since information admittedly is the main product of operations that every exercise in that field should produce information. The collection, organization, and communication would teach reporting. Since writing is the generally used medium of communication, it follows that generally the final phase of reporting, writing the report, is the writing practice already referred to.

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